

High Uintas

September is best month to fish in mountain lakes, where choices abound

By Ray Grass
Deseret News outdoor writer

HIGH UINTAS — Fishermen have it made here. The lakes are candy stores to those with rod and reel. If one lake doesn't whet their appetite, another over the next ridge might, or the one on the next terrace, or the small lake over the boulder field and up the drift. One lake is bound to be attractive.

There are, for fishermen, nearly 650 lakes in the Uintas to choose from. That's how many are managed, which means they have fish, planted or naturally produced. Some have brook trout, others cutthroat, some both. A few have golden trout and there are even some with arctic grayling.

Biologists check these lakes periodically for population size for future planting needs and then duly recognize each lake (see accompany story) as accessible and fishable.

The choices are limitless, the fishing opportunities as good as there are, and all this wrapped in a setting as close to untouched wilderness as country nowadays can get.

And while some believe fishing is waning, the more familiar, an-

glers know the best fishing month is still ahead — September. That's when the temperatures are cooler and the fish more active. It's also one of the most bug-free months. Bothersome mosquitoes are only bad memories.

And yet, there is not a large shifting of fishing pressure to the high country. In fact, if anything, it goes down. School, vacations, decreased interest, a used-up tackle box, or fall football, whatever the reason . . . September in the Uintas is not crowded.

Roger Wilson, fisheries biologist for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, says it's a time when fishermen can have a little solitude, "and not have to walk very far."

According to Wilson, most of the fish in the Uinta lakes are brook trout. The reason, he says, "is the brook can just out-compete the cutthroat and rainbow. Grayling are better at competing. We plant 100 brook per surface acre of water. With cutthroat we have to plant 250 per surface acre.

"One reason for the brooks success is we plant 3-inch brooks in June. The cutthroat haven't even spawned by then. The cutthroat we plant in August when they're about one and a quarter inches."

In both cases, he adds, it takes about two years of growing time before the fish are considered keepers by fishermen.

He warns, however, that people

Ray Grass and fisheries biologist Roger Wilson are reflected in Lake Uinta.

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